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11	INTERNITOR OF	ETATES DISTRICT COLIDT
12	IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT	
13	FOR THE DISTRICT OF ARIZONA	
14	BEST WESTERN INTERNATIONAL, INC., an Arizona non-profit corporation,	No.
15	Tive., an Arizona non-profit corporation,	Verified Complaint for Federal Trademark
16	Plaintiff,	Infringement, False Designation of Origin, Federal Trademark Dilution, Breach of
17		Contract, Open Account, Post Termination
18	RUSSELL M. HONEYCUTT, an individual; E. AUTRY DAWSEY, an	Use of Trademarks, Unfair Competition, State Trademark Dilution, and Common Law
19	individual; and FAYE DAWSEY, an	Trademark Infringement
	individual,	
20	Defendants.	
21	Plaintiff Best Western International, Inc. ("Best Western"), for its Verified	
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23	Complaint against Defendants, Russell Honeycutt, E. Autry Dawsey, and Faye Dawsey, all	
· 24	believed to be North Carolina residents, alleges as follows:	
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NATURE OF THE ACTION

- 1. This is an action for breach of contract, federal trademark infringement, and unfair competition under the Trademark Act of 1946, as amended (the Lanham Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 1051 et seq.), and related common law and Arizona statutory causes of action arising from Defendants' refusal to cease and desist their unauthorized use of Best Western's trade name, trademarks, service marks, logos, and other intellectual property and similar identifying symbols (the "Best Western Symbols") in violation of Best Western's federal and common law trademark rights.
- Defendants' continued use of Best Western Symbols also constitutes a breach of contract, giving rise to liquidated damages.
- 3. Defendants have also failed to pay amounts owing to Best Western on an open account, constituting a violation of common law, breach of contract, and were unjustly enriched.

THE PARTIES, JURISDICTION, AND VENUE

- 4. Plaintiff Best Western is a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Arizona with its headquarters located in Phoenix, Arizona.
- 5. Defendant E. Autry Dawsey is believed to be a North Carolina resident; is the owner of the hotel property at issue in this case; and executed the parties' contract for a Best Western membership. Defendant E. Autry Dawsey is referred to here as "Defendant E. Dawsey."
- 6. Defendant Faye Dawsey is believed to be a North Carolina resident; executed the parties' contract for the Best Western membership at issue here as the spouse of

Defendant E. Dawsey; and is identified in the Membership Agreement as having an interest in the hotel property at issue. Defendants E. Dawsey and Faye Dawsey are referred to collectively as "Defendants Dawsey."

- 7. Defendant Russell Honeycutt is believed to be a North Carolina resident; executed the parties' contract for a Best Western membership; and was designated as the Voting Member for the membership. Defendant Russell Honeycutt is referred to here as "Defendant Honeycutt."
- 8. This Court has jurisdiction over the Lanham Act claim set forth below by virtue of 15 U.S.C. § 1121 and 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1338(a), and over the other claims set forth below by virtue of 28 U.S.C. §§ 1332, 1367 and/or 1338(b).
- 9. There are no matters pending between the parties in any other jurisdiction regarding Defendants' Lanham Act violations.
- of business in Phoenix, and its witnesses are either located in Phoenix or available in Phoenix, and Defendants executed a contract that contained a forum selection clause requiring all disputes arising from that contract be resolved by an Arizona state or federal court. Defendants' trademark violation impacts the goodwill and reputation of Best Western and all of its members, resulting in a significant, direct harm and effect on Best Western, an American corporation engaged in commerce in the United States, Canada, and worldwide. Defendants contractually agreed to liquidated damages in the event that they continued to use Best Western Symbols after the termination of their membership. Defendants' continued use of the Best Western Symbols, a business name representing quality and reputation that is sold

for use by others, wrongfully capitalizes on the goodwill and reputation of Best Western. If the Best Western name is diluted and the reputation tainted, all Best Western members and customers are adversely impacted.

over Defendants by this Court are proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) and (c) and because, among other reasons: (a) the Defendants expressly contractually agreed to litigate all disputes with Best Western arising from or related to the Best Western Membership Application and Agreement executed by Defendants on or about September 7, 1994 (the "Membership Agreement"), or any relationship between the parties, in the Arizona state or federal courts; (b) Defendants have caused events to occur and injuries to result in the State of Arizona; and (c) Defendants aimed their conduct at Best Western knowing that Best Western is located in Arizona, and harming Best Western in Arizona. *See* Membership Application and Agreement, attached here as Exhibit 1, Paragraphs 37-38.

GENERAL ALLEGATIONS

- 12. Best Western operates as a membership organization consisting of individually owned and operated hotels (i.e., its members). The rights and obligations of Best Western's members are determined by the membership and are set forth in the Membership Agreement, Best Western's Bylaws & Articles, Best Western's Rules and Regulations, and other Best Western "Regulatory Documents" as that term is defined in Best Western's Bylaws (the "Regulatory Documents").
- 13. Best Western provides its members with a worldwide reservation system and worldwide marketing campaigns, as well as an option to participate in collective

purchasing of hotel equipment, furnishings, and supplies (the "Best Western Services"). Best Western employs a large number of employees worldwide who are dedicated to providing member hotels with the Best Western Services.

- 14. Each Best Western member is authorized to use the Best Western Symbols in connection with its hotel pursuant to a limited, non-exclusive license (the "Best Western License"), which is set forth in the Membership Agreement. *See* Membership Agreement at ¶¶ 1, 19-26.
- Western License, Best Western members are obligated to, among other things, pay annual dues, membership fees, and other assessments. The membership fees are due December 1 of each year and are billed in monthly installments over the course of the following year to accommodate members. Annual dues are charged in August of each year. All other dues, fees and assessments are billed monthly. Pursuant to Best Western Bylaws Article II, Section 7, if a member resigns or is terminated, fees and dues for the remainder of the fiscal year will become immediately due and payable.
- 16. Best Western first adopted "Best Western" as its trade name in 1947. Shortly thereafter, Best Western adopted and began using "Best Western" as a trademark identifying hotel services provided by member hotels that were affiliated with Best Western. Best Western has continuously and extensively promoted its trade name and trademark in interstate commerce since 1947. As a result of this extensive promotion, the trade name and trademark have become famous among consumers as a source-identifying symbol.

17. Since 1959, Best Western has registered with the United States Patent and Trademark Office ("USPTO") various trademarks, service marks, and collective membership marks. On April 14, 1959, the Best Western logo was first registered as a service mark by the USPTO under Registration No. 677,103. Best Western has developed the Best Western Symbols at great expense over the past decades.

- 18. Best Western owns the following registrations for Best Western Symbols and the marks referenced in these registrations:
- (a) a Best Western logo was registered as a collective membership mark by the USPTO on June 8, 1971, under Registration No. 914,812, which was registered to Western Motels, Inc., but assigned to Best Western International, Inc. in 1979, and is still active;
- (b) a Best Western logo was registered as a service mark by the USPTO on June 8, 1971, under Registration No. 914,813, which was registered to Western Motels, Inc., but assigned to Best Western International, Inc. in 1979, and is still active;
- (c) a Best Western logo was registered as a service mark by the USPTO on August 30, 1977, under Registration No. 1,072,360;
- (d) a Best Western logo was registered as a collective membership mark by the USPTO on September 27, 1977, under Registration No. 1,074,300 to Best Western, Inc. and assigned to Best Western International, Inc. in 1979, and is still active;
- (e) the Best Western word mark was registered by the USPTO as a service mark on February 3, 1987, under Registration No. 1,427,735;

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and 3,083,667;

(p) BW was registered by the USPTO as a service mark on November29, 2005, under Registration No. 3,020,526; and

- (q) Best Western has registered a variety of other designs and phrases as service marks in connection with the trade of hotel and motel lodging, many of which incorporate the words BEST WESTERN.
- 19. All of the registrations described above are currently in full force and effect, unrevoked, and uncanceled. Several of the above listed federal registrations for the Best Western word mark and logo have become incontestable under 15 U.S.C. § 1065.
- 20. The Best Western Symbols are inherently distinctive and possess strong secondary meaning.
- 21. The Membership Agreement and Regulatory Documents establish the minimum standard scores that each member must meet in order to achieve and maintain membership. As a result, consumers worldwide associate Best Western Symbols with high quality in the hotel/motel industry.
- 22. A key element of Best Western's branding effort is the display of the Best Western Symbols on the premises of member hotels through signs, publications, and other public displays.
- 23. Upon default by a member of certain of its obligations to Best Western, including obligations set forth in the Membership Agreement and Regulatory Documents, the Best Western Board of Directors may terminate the membership and the Best Western License.

24. Within 15 days following the termination of membership, the former member must cease and desist from using, and remove from public view, all Best Western Symbols and all references to Best Western. The former member is also required to cease and desist from using any item that is similar to the Best Western Symbols in spelling, sound, appearance, or in any other manner.

DEFENDANTS' BEST WESTERN MEMBERSHIP

- 25. On or about September 7, 1994, Defendants Dawsey and Defendant Honeycutt executed the Membership Agreement attached here as Exhibit 1 as the owners of the Hotel and as the Voting Member, respectively.
- 26. Upon Best Western's approval of the Membership Agreement,
 Defendants Dawsey and Defendant Honeycutt were bound by the Membership Agreement
 and Regulatory Documents.
- 27. Defendants Dawsey and Defendant Honeycutt owned and operated the hotel formerly known as the Best Western Premiere Inn, located at 503 North JK Powell Blvd., Whiteville, North Carolina, 28472-2128, which is referenced in Best Western's records as property T-34072 (the "Hotel").
- 28. Through the Membership Agreement and the Regulatory Documents, Defendants agreed to timely pay all fees, dues, charges, and assessments imposed generally on the membership by the board of Best Western and to promptly pay the costs of all goods or services provided by or ordered through Best Western. Additionally, Defendants further agreed that past due amounts would bear interest at the rate of one and one-half percent (1.5%) per month from the date due until paid, provided that such interest charges would in

them.

the duration of the Best Western License.

29. The Membership Agreement grants the Best Western member a limited, non-exclusive Best Western License, thereby allowing them to use the Best Western Symbols in connection with the Hotel, subject to the terms of the Best Western License, and only for

no way authorize or excuse late payments or limit Best Western's rights and remedies against

- 30. Termination of the Best Western Membership results in termination of the Best Western License, and imposes the obligation to "remove from public view and cease using" all Best Western Symbols and all other references to Best Western within 15 days of the date of termination. See Membership Agreement at ¶ 22.
- 31. Upon termination of the Best Western License, the former member(s) must "actively take steps as may be necessary to cause the cessation of all advertising and distribution of promotional material containing any Best Western Symbol." *See* Membership Agreement at ¶ 22.
- 32. Upon termination of the Best Western License, the former member(s) must not use "anything consisting of or incorporating any one or more words, letters, designs or devices which contain any part of any Best Western Symbol, or which singly or together are similar in spelling, sound, appearance or otherwise to any Best Western Symbol." *See* Membership Agreement at ¶ 23.
 - 33. The Regulatory Documents also state that:

Upon termination or cancellation of membership, the former Best Western member shall remove the Best Western sign When the sign cabinet is removed, it must be destroyed or modified so that the top of the cabinet has no curvilinear features The

shall be the responsibility of the former member.

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them within 15 days of November 30, 2010—by December 16, 2010.

See Rules and Regulations, Section 300.6, attached here as Exhibit 2. Defendants' Best Western membership terminated on November 30, 34.

cost of removal of Best Western identification upon termination

hereto as Exhibit 3. The cancellation of the membership resulted in cancellation of the License to use Best Western Symbols, and therefore Defendants were obligated to remove

2010, due to their delinquent open account. See Letter dated November 30, 2010 attached

On December 28, 2010, in the ordinary course of its business, Best 36. Western sent its representative to the Hotel. As part of his regular duties, Best Western's representative observed Best Western Symbols displayed on various items throughout the Hotel and on signage for the Hotel.

In a letter dated January 19, 2011, Best Western instructed the 37. Defendants that they must pay the full balance of their open account, which as of January 19, 2011 was \$98,645.07. The letter also advised the Defendants that they must discontinue any unauthorized use of the Best Western name, signs, and logos; remove any and all listings of the Hotel on internet websites under the Best Western name; and disclose the use/registration of any domain names comprising any of the Best Western marks, and transfer such domain names to Best Western International. A copy of the January 19, 2011 letter is attached as Exhibit 4.

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38. On February 21, 2011 and February 22, 2011, in the ordinary course of its business, Best Western again sent its representative to the Hotel. As part of his regular duties, Best Western's representative observed that the face of the main sign for the hotel had been blacked out, but numerous logos remained on items found throughout the hotel—including wastebaskets, laundry bags, evacuation signs, and phone plates. Additionally, Best Western's representative observed that a roadside billboard still advertised the Hotel as a Best Western member. *See* photographs attached as Exhibit 5.

- 39. Despite that it is no longer a Best Western, the December 28, 2010 inspection and subsequent February 21-22, 2011 inspection revealed that the Hotel continued to hold itself out as a Best Western member after the License terminated.
- 40. Defendants' failure to remove the items bearing the Best Western Symbols used in connection with the operation of the Hotel is likely to lead the travelling public to believe that the Hotel is a Best Western property.
- 41. Defendants' failure to remove items containing the Best Western Symbols in the Hotel and on the roadside billboard irreparably injures Best Western and its members.
- 42. Defendants' continued use of Best Western Symbols beyond December 16, 2010 also constitutes a breach of the Membership Agreement.
- 43. Defendants' intentional and unlawful use of the Best Western Symbols in connection with the Hotel is likely to cause confusion for the travelling public and for those who stayed at the Hotel with the mistaken belief that the Hotel was a Best Western property.

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damaged the reputation and goodwill that Best Western built through the years.

45. As of March 1, 2011, Defendants owe Best Western no less than \$101,983.13 on an open account that Defendants had while a Best Western member, which

Defendants' misconduct also likely diverted to them the benefit of and/or

See Invoices dated September 1, 2010 through March 1, 2011 attached hereto as Exhibit 6.

represents certain fees and other charges imposed on the Hotel as a Best Western member.

- 46. Best Western has fully performed all of its obligations under the Membership Agreement.
- 47. Defendants have refused and continue to refuse to pay to Best Western the amounts due and owing.

COUNT I – BREACH OF CONTRACT

- 48. Best Western incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 47 above as though fully set forth herein.
- 49. Defendants have refused and continue to refuse to pay to Best Western the amounts due and owing as required by the Membership Agreement.
- 50. Pursuant to the express terms of the Membership Agreement, interest has accrued and continues to accrue on the unpaid amounts at the rate of one and one-half percent (1.5%) per month.
- 51. As of March 1, 2011, there remains due and owing, by Defendants to Best Western, the sum of no less than \$101,983.13.
- 52. Pursuant to ¶ 36 of the Membership Agreement, and A.R.S. §§ 12-341 and 12-341.01, Best Western is entitled to recover the attorneys' fees and costs incurred in

pursuing this action.

COUNT II - OPEN ACCOUNT

- 53. Best Western incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 52 above as though fully set forth herein.
- 54. Best Western rendered services and provided supplies on an open account, and Defendants agreed to pay for such services and supplies on an open account and to pay for such services and supplies when due in accordance with the Membership Agreement.
- 55. Defendants have failed to pay for the services and supplies that Best Western has provided. As of March 1, 2011, there remains due and owing, by Defendants to Best Western, the sum of no less than \$101,983.13.
- 56. Pursuant to the express terms of the Membership Agreement, interest has accrued and continues to accrue on this sum at the rate of one and one-half percent (1.5%) per month until paid in full.
- 57. Pursuant to ¶ 36 of the Membership Agreement, and A.R.S. §§ 12-341 and 12-341.01, Best Western is entitled to recover the attorneys' fees and costs incurred in pursuing this action.

COUNT III – BREACH OF CONTRACT; POST TERMINATION USE OF TRADEMARKS

58. Best Western incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 57 as though fully set forth herein.

- 59. Pursuant to the express terms of the Membership Agreement, Defendants were obligated to remove from public view, and to cease all use of, the Best Western Symbols in connection with the Hotel within fifteen (15) days after termination. This prohibition includes making any representation, whether direct or indirect, indicating that the Hotel is affiliated with Best Western.
- 60. Defendants continued to hold the Hotel out as a Best Western property after the License terminated.
- damages where, as here, a former member continues to use the Best Western Symbols in connection with the Hotel for more than fifteen (15) days following the termination of their Best Western membership and the Best Western License. The amount of liquidated damages is equal to fifteen percent (15%) of the mean of the Hotel's room rates per day, multiplied by the total number of rooms for every day that a former member continues to use the Best Western Symbols beyond the fifteen-day period.
- 62. Beginning December 16, 2010, Defendants owe \$1,098.01 per day for each day they are unlawfully using the Best Western Symbols. The liquidated damages calculations are based on the Hotel's information regarding daily rates and total number of rooms. A copy of the Marketing Statistics Report showing the Average Daily Rates (ADR) for the Hotel and the Best Western Account Information Computer Screen, showing the number of units for the Hotel, are attached as Exhibit 7.
- 63. Pursuant to ¶ 36 of the Membership Agreement, and A.R.S. § 12-341.01, Best Western is entitled to recover all attorneys' fees and costs incurred in this action.

COUNT IV – FEDERAL TRADEMARK INFRINGEMENT (15 U.S.C. § 1114(1))

- 64. Best Western incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 63 as though fully set forth herein.
- 65. Defendants have failed to cease and desist from the use of the federally registered Best Western Symbols in connection with the Hotel.
- 66. The inspection revealed myriad federally registered Best Western Symbols displayed at the property and on a roadside billboard well after the License terminated.
- 67. Defendants' actions complained of have at all times been without Best Western's consent. Defendants' acts constitute infringement of the federally registered Best Western Symbols in violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1114(1).
- Monetary damages will not afford full and adequate relief for all of Best Western's injuries resulting from Defendants' conduct. Such injuries include harm to Best Western's goodwill and reputation in the marketplace that money cannot sufficiently compensate. Best Western is, therefore, requesting and entitled to a preliminary and permanent injunction restraining and enjoining defendants and their respective officers, members, agents, servants, employees, and any other persons or entities acting on behalf of or in concert with Defendants, from using the Best Western Symbols or any colorable imitation thereof, in connection with the promotion, advertisement, and sale of goods and services without Best Western's authorization, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1116.

Monetary damages will not afford full and adequate relief for all of Best Western's injuries resulting from Defendants' conduct. Such injuries include harm to Best Western's goodwill and reputation in the marketplace that money cannot sufficiently compensate. Best Western is, therefore, requesting and entitled to a preliminary and permanent injunction restraining and enjoining defendants and their respective officers, members, agents, servants, employees, and any other persons or entities acting on behalf of or in concert with Defendants, from using the Best Western Symbols or any colorable imitation thereof, in connection with the promotion, advertisement, and sale of goods and services without Best Western's authorization, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1116.

77. Defendants' acts of unfair competition are willful and entitle Best Western to recover damages, attorneys' fees, and costs pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1117.

COUNT VI – FEDERAL TRADEMARK DILUTION – (15 U.S.C. § 1125(c))

- 78. Best Western incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 77 above as though fully set forth herein.
- 79. Best Western has advertised and publicized the Best Western Symbols extensively for decades throughout the United States, including the State of Arizona. As a result of their inherent distinctiveness and extraordinarily widespread use, the Best Western Symbols have acquired a high degree of recognition and fame for hotel services.
- 80. Defendants' unauthorized post-termination use of the Best Western Symbols in commerce began long after Best Western's Symbols had already become famous throughout the United States, including the State of Arizona.

81. Defendants' unauthorized post-termination use of the Best Western Symbols or variations thereof is likely to cause dilution of the distinctive quality of the Best Western Symbols.

- 82. Upon information and belief, Defendants have committed the acts complained of herein willfully and with the intent to trade on Best Western's reputation and/or to cause dilution of Best Western's famous Symbols.
- Monetary damages will not afford full and adequate relief for all of Best Western's injuries resulting from Defendants' conduct. Such injuries include harm to Best Western's goodwill and reputation in the marketplace that money cannot sufficiently compensate. Best Western is, therefore, requesting and entitled to a preliminary and permanent injunction restraining and enjoining defendants and their respective officers, members, agents, servants, employees, and any other persons or entities acting on behalf of or in concert with Defendants, from using the Best Western Symbols or any colorable imitation thereof, in connection with the promotion, advertisement, and sale of goods and services without Best Western's authorization, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1116.
- 84. Defendants' acts of unfair competition are willful and entitle Best Western to recover damages, attorneys' fees, and costs pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1117.

COUNT VII – UNFAIR COMPETITION – ARIZONA LAW

85. Best Western incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 84 above as though fully set forth herein.

86. Defendants' acts complained of herein constitute unfair competition under the laws of the State of Arizona.

- 87. Defendants have been unjustly enriched and have damaged Best Western's business, reputation, and goodwill.
- 88. Upon information and belief, Defendants' acts complained of herein were intentional, wanton, willful, guided by an evil hand and mind, and committed in bad faith and with the intent to confuse and deceive the public.
- 89. Defendants' acts complained of herein have caused Best Western irreparable harm for which there is no adequate remedy at law.

COUNT VIII - TRADEMARK DILUTION UNDER ARIZONA LAW - (A.R.S. § 44-1448.01)

- 90. Best Western incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 89 above as though fully set forth herein.
- 91. The Best Western Symbols are famous within the State of Arizona, and became famous in Arizona long before Defendants began using the marks.
- 92. Defendants' acts complained of herein constitute commercial use of a mark or trade name that is likely to cause dilution of the distinctive quality of the famous Best Western Symbols.
- 93. Defendants have undertaken these acts willfully and with the intent to trade on Best Western's reputation or to cause dilution of the Best Western Symbols.
- 94. Defendants' acts complained of herein caused, or are likely to cause, dilution to the famous Best Western Symbols in violation of A.R.S. § 44-1448.01.

95. Defendants' acts complained of herein have caused irreparable harm and injury to Best Western's famous Best Western Symbols, business reputation, and goodwill for which there is no adequate remedy at law.

<u>COUNT IX – TRADEMARK INFRINGEMENT UNDER ARIZONA LAW - (A.R.S. § 44-1451)</u>

- 96. Best Western incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 95 above as though fully set forth herein.
- 97. The Best Western Symbols are famous within the State of Arizona, and became famous in Arizona long before Defendants began using the marks.
- 98. Defendants' acts complained of herein constitute commercial use of a mark or trade name and trademark infringement based on Arizona registered Trademark No. 51370 in violation of A.R.S. § 44-1451.
- 99. Upon information and belief, Defendants have undertaken these acts willfully and with the intent to trade on Best Western's reputation and to cause confusion, mistake, and deception on the public.
- 100. Defendants' acts complained of herein have caused irreparable harm and injury to Best Western's famous Best Western Symbols, business reputation, and goodwill for which there is no adequate remedy at law.

COUNT X - COMMON LAW TRADEMARK INFRINGEMENT

101. Best Western incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 100 above as though fully set forth herein.

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102. Best Western has common law rights in the Best Western Symbols through the use of the marks in commerce, such rights existing long before any use of the marks by Defendants.

- 103. Defendants' acts complained of herein constitute common law infringement of the Best Western Symbols.
- 104. Upon information and belief, Defendants have undertaken these acts willfully and with the intent to trade on Best Western's reputation and to cause confusion, mistake, and deception on the public.
- 105. Defendants' acts complained of herein have caused irreparable harm and injury to Best Western's famous Best Western Symbols, business reputation, and goodwill for which there is no adequate remedy at law.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Best Western International, Inc. seeks judgment against Defendants, jointly and severally, as follows:

A. With respect to Counts I and II:

The total of unpaid fees, which as of March 1, 2011, totals no less than \$101,983.13, including interest at the rate of one and one-half percent (1.5%) per month until paid in full.

- B. With respect to Count III:
- 1. Liquidated damages for breach of the Best Western Agreement in an amount equal to fifteen percent (15%) of the mean of the Hotel's room rates per day